(0 Circulation of new editions, display of jacket covers of new books, exhibition of books constitute the main thrust in propagating book reading habit among the employees in the Ministry of Defence.

New Battalions of Rashtriya Rifles

508. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a plan to raise 30 new battalions of the Rashtriya Rifles with over 25,000 troops;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the anticipated expenditure, recurring and non-recurring, on the new establishment; and

(d) whether this avoidable expenditure cannot be diverted for development projects in the country where starvation and death arc on increase?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) Government have approved, in principle, a proposal to raise thirty new battalions of Rashtriya Rifles over a period of five years, six battalions per year commencing from 2001-2002 to 2004-2005, subject to an annual review each year prior to the actual raisings. These new battalions arc being raised for relieving the regular army units which have been deployed for counter insurgency duties along side the para military forces in the J&K Slate. The anticipated expenditure for these planned raisings is Rs. 575 crore initialy and Rs. 545 crore for annual maintenance. This expenditure is not avoidable in the context of the security imperatives that face the nation. However, this expenditure is not at the cost of development projects which are funded in their own right and priority.

Time Frame for Trial Test of Kaveri Engine

509. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any item frame has been fixed for trial testing of Kaveri engine which powers the LCA;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) to what extent the engine is indigenous and what are the foreign components that are still used in the Kaveri engine?